

Cambridge and County Folk Museum

2 & 3 CASTLE STREET

CAMBRIDGE

A BRIEF GUIDE

by

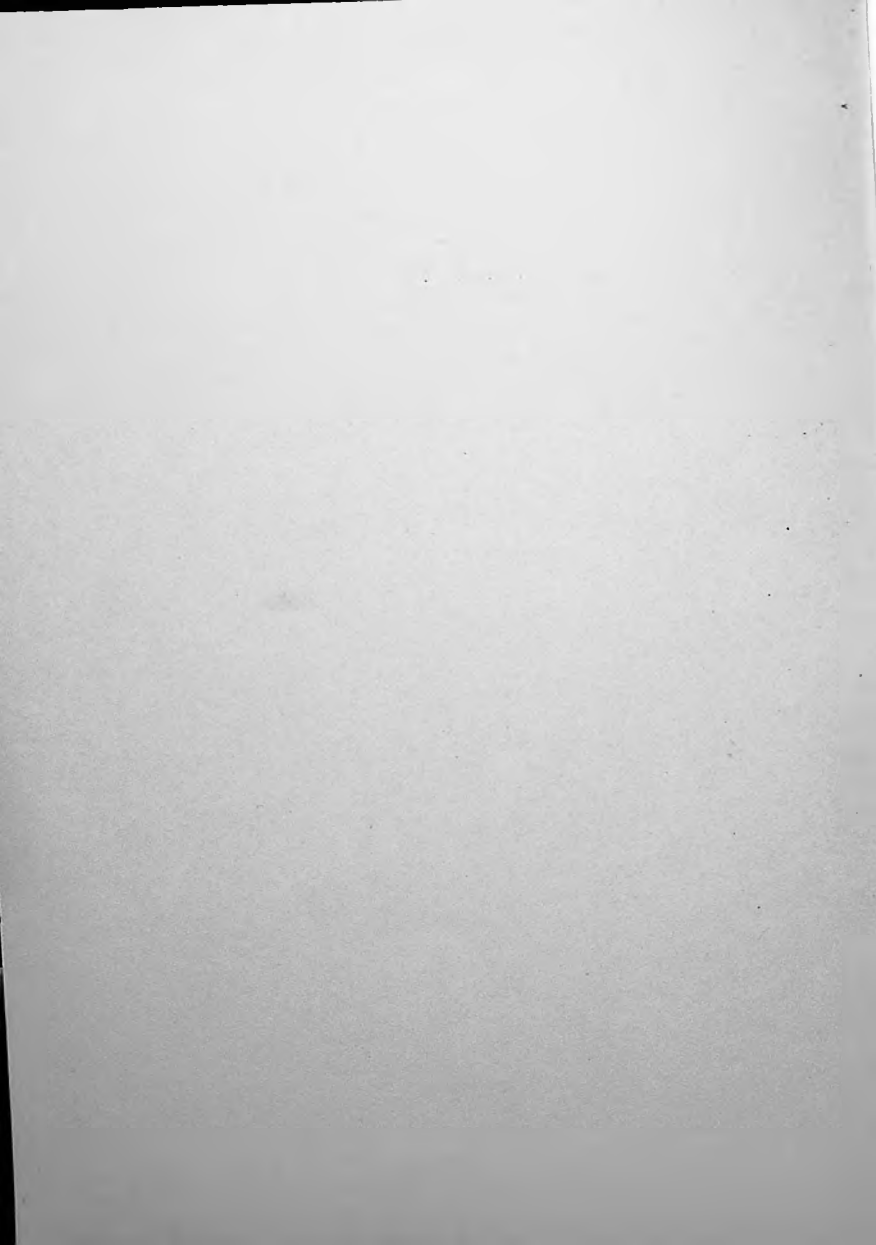
ENID M. PORTER, B.A.

Curator

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ILLUSTRATED



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HOURS OF OPENING:

Weekdays (except Mondays)	..	11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
		2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.
Sundays	2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

ADMISSION:

Adults 6d.

Children 3d.



Circular Fire Grate, 1851, from 1 Post Office Terrace

THE CAMBRIDGE & COUNTY FOLK MUSEUM

THE Museum was opened in 1936 and contains exhibits gathered only from the City and County of Cambridge and from the Isle of Ely. These exhibits illustrate the life, work and history of the people of Cambridge and Cambridgeshire from medieval times until the beginning of this century.

This short Guide does not claim to be a catalogue of all the objects in the Museum since these are constantly being added to: from time to time, moreover, exhibits are changed so as to allow as many as possible to be seen in turn. It is hoped, however, that this booklet will help the visitor to gain some idea of the nature of the Museum and its contents and of the building in which they are housed.

The Museum occupies Nos. 2 and 3 Castle Street. No. 2 was, until 1934, the *White Horse Inn*. No. 3, which may, at one time, have been part of the original Inn, was used partly for the Curator's residence and partly for storage until 1961, when it was completely restored and, from January 1962, used for additional Museum display. The entire range of Nos. 2 and 3, facing the Street, was built in the 16th century; in the 17th century the White Horse Inn was almost doubled in size by the building of an additional range behind the first, while a third wing was added on their West side, c. 1700. All the walls are of plastered timber-framing and the restoration carried out in 1961 revealed some fragments of wattle and daub construction behind the plaster. The most noteworthy feature of the former Inn is the great central chimney stack in the S.W. wall of the 16th century part of the house. Everywhere there is an interesting use of pine wood in the structural timbers in place of the oak more commonly used in buildings of this date. This is because woods from the Baltic countries could easily reach Cambridge, when the town was a port, by way of the river from King's Lynn. Modern windows were inserted in the whole of the street frontage, on the first floor, in 1922 when the original overhanging storey was removed; the roof of the entire building was re-hung with old tiles in 1957.

ENTRANCE to the Museum is by the door of No. 3 Castle Street. Admission tickets, guide books and postcards can be obtained at the Curator's office near the door. The visitor then enters

ROOM 1 TRADES & OCCUPATIONS

Here are displayed the tools and implements of the various trades and professions carried on in the district. The tanner, brickmaker, basket maker, straw plaiter, cooper, apothecary, shoemaker, saddler and many others are represented in the Museum's collection, but as the room is a small one not all the exhibits can be shown at one time. Any not on view may be seen on application to the Curator.

On the wall above the fireplace is a small collection of local shop signs while, below, is an interesting Circular Fire Grate of 1851, removed from a Cambridge house, which is constructed on the principle of the modern convector stoves.

Near the door is a small wall case containing a selection of Cambridge and Cambridgeshire Trade Tokens issued by tradesmen to meet the deficiency of small coinage in the mid 17th century.

On the table in the centre of the room is a collection of local building materials—handmade and early wire-cut Cambridge bricks; 17th century roof tiles with their original pegs; early window glass, etc. Also shown is a piece of clunch, the local chalk formerly much used in building, and a fragment of reed and plaster wall from the former 16th century Cross Keys Inn in Magdalene Street.

On the wall to the right of the entrance door is an interesting brush designed by George Smith, a Cambridge chimney sweep in the 1860's, so that he would not have to employ boys to climb the chimneys. With it is a silver medal presented to him by the Climbing Boys Society, founded by Lord Shaftesbury, in recognition of his help in "abolishing the climbing system."

On the window sill is part of the string-course formerly on No. 11 Sidney Street where Joshua Lee, a 19th century pipemaker lived. The stone bears his trade sign of two crossed churchwarden pipes. The Museum possesses a comprehensive collection of clay pipes which, if not on view at any time, can be seen on request.

Leaving Room 1, the visitor proceeds along the short passage at the end of which is

THE BAR

This is the original Bar of the White Horse Inn and was in use as such until 1934. In it can be seen pewter pots and measures, a cask and stand, earthenware and glass wine and spirit casks, Madeira wine bottles of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and a number of mineral water bottles—"Brighton Seltzer Water," "Lythia Water," etc.—of local firms, with some "marble"-stoppered gingerbeer bottles.

On the glass of the door to the Bar a landlord of the last century, William Loveday, has scratched his name beside that of his wife Lil, the daughter of John Carter who had previously kept the inn. Two customers of the 19th century have also left their names on the glass—a Signor Fosco and George Fleet, the latter a former head porter of Magdalene College. A more recent inscription records that H.M. the late Queen Mary visited the house in August 1938.

By the Bar is the entrance to

ROOM 2 COOKING & LIGHTING EXHIBITS

This room was formerly the Bar Parlour of the Inn. On the right is the only remaining open fireplace in the house and in it are arranged the cooking appliances of the past—spits, jacks, gridirons, etc., hanging from iron hooks in the wide 16th century chimney. Round the fireplace can be seen Dutch ovens, salt and knife boxes, a salamander, a "Hastener," meat forks and other objects used in the preparation and cooking of food.

On a table near the window is an interesting Parlour Sink used for washing the best china in the drawing room; with it are an 18th century urn which held the hot water for tea-making. A solid metal cylinder, heated red hot, was inserted in a central cavity in the urn to keep the water at boiling point. Nearby are a 19th century spirit kettle and other tea-making equipment, and an 18th century posset pot.

The long table in the centre of the room is devoted to lighting appliances—rushlights and their holders, candlesticks of several kinds, lanterns, lamps, early matches, etc.

Other exhibits to be noted in this room included the sugar loaf and its cutters, the gingerbread moulds, the slip-ware dishes and other pottery, together with the various cooking implements of the 18th and 19th centuries—wafering irons, lemon squeezers, steak beaters, bread rasp, etc.

From this room the visitor passes directly to

ROOM 3 THE KITCHEN

The centre of the room is occupied by the large 19th century Box Mangle used for pressing linen after it had been washed and dried. The corner cupboard contains other laundry equipment—irons of several types (Italian, box, charcoal, methylated spirit) and several goffering implements, while nearby are two linen presses, a large one for the storage of sheets, tablecloths, etc., the smaller one for table napkins.

On the dresser is a display of Treen or small wooden ware—18th and 19th century plates, bowls, porringers, strainers and measures, together with earthenware storage jars made at Sibley's Pottery in Ely, which existed there until 1863. Two types of patent knife cleaners with knife cleaning boards can be seen nearby. The case in the centre of the dresser contains tableware of the 16th to 19th centuries and various small objects used in the preparation of food or for cleaning.

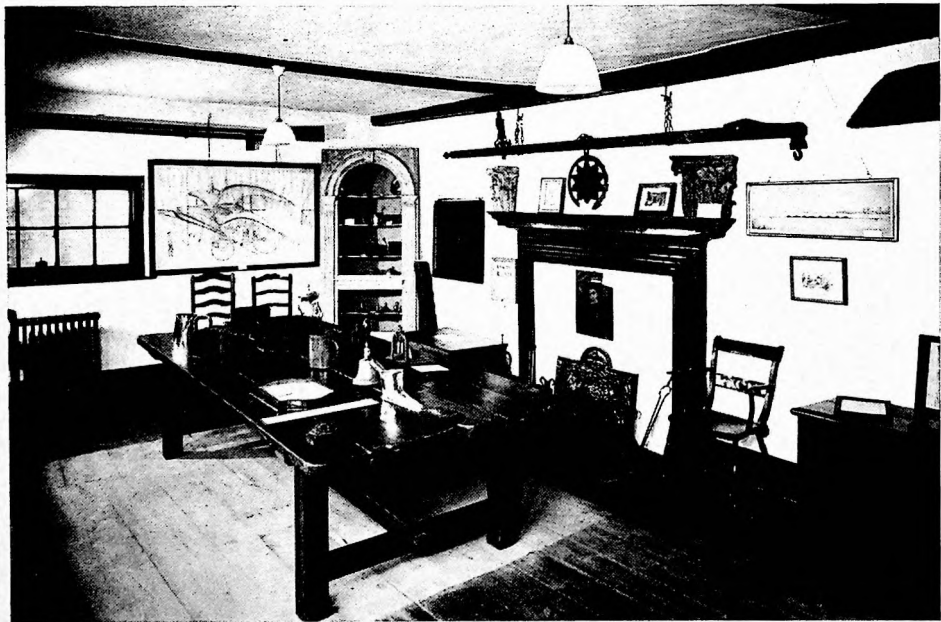
A Davis Gas Cooker of 1895 stands by the window next to the early 20th century roller mangle. Four types of hand-operated vacuum cleaners, the earliest dating from 1908 the latest from c. 1920, can be seen in this room.

The fireplace, which originally extended as far as the wall, contains an early 19th century cooking range whose top can be adjusted to the size of the pots by turning a handle. On the stove is an iron pot, its lid fitted with a valve. This was known as a Digester and represents an early form of the modern pressure cooker.

Ascending the stairs at the side of the fireplace the visitor comes to

ROOM 4 DOMESTIC CRAFTS

An interesting feature here, to the right of the fireplace, is the deep closet once used for powdering wigs. The small window through which the wigs were shaken to dispose of the excess powder is now blocked up.



A corner of the City and University Room

(Photograph by Edward Leigh, Cambridge)

The Inn sign above the staves is that of the Brazen George Inn, originally a medieval student's hostel which once stood opposite Christ's College in St. Andrew's Street.

Among other items of interest in this room are the drawing of an aerial machine designed by Edward Frost of West Wrattling Hall in 1877; the medieval carved stone figure of an angel from the former Augustinian Priory of Barnwell and another carved stone head removed from the gable end of a house in Staffordshire Street, demolished in 1961. Notice, also, the letter box, on the fireplace, of "The Gownsmen", an undergraduate journal to which Thackeray was a contributor; the broadside issued at a public execution in Cambridge in 1850 and the various Assize Lists which show the severe sentences given in the past for comparatively slight offences.

Along the passage leading from this room is

ROOM 6 CHILDREN'S ROOM

This contains a collection of dolls' houses, miniature furniture, dolls and toys. In front of the window stand a Zoetrope—the 19th century fore-runner of the home cinema—a locally-made wicker doll's cradle and an 18th century Pedlar Doll. The latter carries a basket filled with miniature wares. Three types of "Walks" or "Runners" for teaching young children their first steps can be seen in this room while, on the wall, are backboards used in homes and schools in the 18th and 19th centuries for preventing and curing round shoulders in girls. One of the oldest dolls in the room is the large wax-faced one in the Go-cart near the window. She dates from 1810 and beside her is the miniature of her original owner, Mary Ann Walker.

Adjoining the room is

ROOM 7 CHILDREN'S ROOM

Here may be found further nursery exhibits including dolls' beds of all kinds and various types of cradles and cots for babies. The velvet-covered rocking cradle came from Madingley Hall, Cambridge, where it was used by members of the Cotton family. The cover is of the 18th century but the cradle itself may well be a century earlier. The curtained swinging cot near the window came from Newnham Grange, now Darwin College. It was exhibited at the 1851 Exhibition.

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Among the toys in the case on the right-hand wall is an interesting model of a butcher's shop. This was rescued from the fire of 1849 which destroyed the shops and houses then standing in the centre of the Market Place. Nearby is an early Victorian toy railway engine with an open-type carriage of the period. Above the case is a wooden doll's cradle made by the carpenter of West Wratting in 1841.

Returning to the passage, the visitor mounts the stairs which were built in 1961 on the site of that used to be a chimney hole or small room-like aperture through which it was possible to look down on the wide fire place of Room 3.

The stairs give access to

ROOM 8. RURAL LIFE

This room was completely restored in 1961 and first opened to the public in January 1962. The small recess on the North Side was originally a sleeping dormer, but a modern small window has replaced the original sliding shutter.

Here are assembled smaller farming implements of various kinds—scythes, bill-hooks, ditching and hedging tools, forestry tools, shepherds' crooks and sheep bells, etc. Below one window is a breast plough which, operated by hand, was used in the last century for paring the top surface of the soil in preparation of the ground for market gardening. Nearby is a hand-worked chaff cutter and a collection of vermin traps for catching badgers, foxes, moles, etc. There are also two man traps, one a vicious, toothed model of the 18th century, the other, much larger, of the type used in the 19th century to replace the former, then declared illegal.

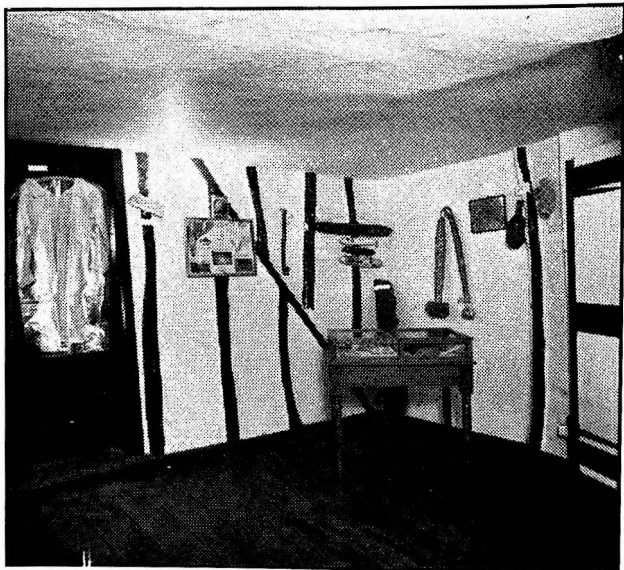
One end of the room is devoted to dairy exhibits—churns, butter stamps, milk measures, etc. Of special interest is the basket in which was carried the famous Cambridge Yard Butter, together with a butter measure, boards used for shaping the yard-long rolls by hand, and scales with a special long pan for weighing the butter.

Above the door is a wooden lintel inscribed "Cheeses Room." This came from Lordship Manor, Cottenham, once the home of Catherine Pepys, a kinswoman of the famous diarist. Cottenham was noted for its cheese which was made there until early in this century.



A corner of the Rural Life Room

(Acknowledgements to Cambridge News)



A corner of the Fens and Folklore Room

(Acknowledgements to Cambridge News)

Other items of interest in this room are the models of agricultural implements made at Whittlesford by the firm of Maynard (1829-1961) who were particularly noted for their chaff cutters. The models include those of a swath turner, horse rake, grass-hopper elevator, etc.

On the round table in the centre of the room is a sparrow pot used to attract birds to nest in it instead of in the thatch of a house; with it is a fiddle drill for sowing fine seed broadcast. Notice, too, the two types of hummellers for awning barley, the winnowing basket, flails, birdscarers and the various types of vessels for taking beer or cider into harvest field, from the 18th century leather container to the 19th century costrel and the 20th century enamel can.

From the exit near the dairy exhibits the visitor descends a few steps to

ROOM 9 THE FENS & FOLKLORE

This room, like the preceding one, was restored in 1961 and first opened to the public in January, 1962.

Here can be seen a collection of tools used in the traditional Fen crafts of the past—peat digging, sedge cutting, eel-spearing and fishing. On one wall are various types of digging shoes worn by workers in the marshy soils of the Fens, together with two overshoes for horses. These were attached to the back feet of the animals to prevent them from sinking into the Fenland mud.

With the digging shoes is a pair of creeping irons worn by the coprolite diggers of the last century. Coprolites, or phosphatic nodules of clay, shells and parts of extinct animals, were widely dug in Cambridgeshire for use as fertilisers; some coprolites may be seen in the case near the window. On the wall nearby are examples of the wooden scoops and spades used in the last century for claying—that is, extracting and spreading the underlying clay over the fine black fen soil to make the latter more fertile and less liable to dispersal by strong winds.

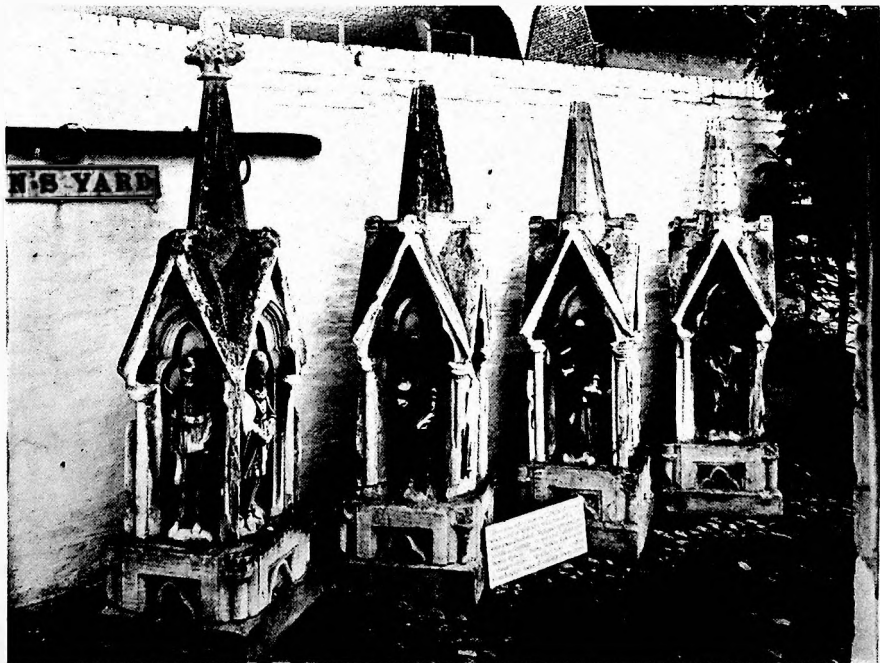
Fen sports are represented by a collection of skates, a stick for playing Bandy or hockey on the ice, iron quoits and cheeses for skittles. There is an interesting pair of three-wheeled roller skates designed by A. E. Tebbitt, a former Fen skating champion, for gaining practice in preparation for skating on ice. He often used them on the roads near his Waterbeach farm.

In cases in the Folklore Section are witch bottles, cures and charms for cramp, ague and toothache, etc., a straw courtship token, a wish-bone tied with red wool—a charm against rickets—and a small loaf baked on Good Friday, 1919. Such bread was declared never to go mouldy and to be, when grated, a cure for digestive troubles. Labels accompanying these and other folklore exhibits give full information concerning the beliefs, etc. connected with the charms. Other items include animal bones—two leg bones of horses and one of a dog. One of these was found in a cottage in Histon in a layer of animal bones between two courses of brick in a chimney arch, having been placed there in the 17th century as a protection against evil—a survival of pre-Christian foundation sacrifice. Another was found in 1959 in the foundations of the stables of the former White Horse Inn, demolished for the erection of the Curator's Cottage. It was a common East Anglian practice to place a horse's head or bones in the foundations of a building as a protective measure; placed under stables the bones were thought to prevent horses being ridden by witches at night. The dog's leg bone was found in 1965 in the chimney breast of a 17th century room in Magdalene College. Other devices to protect buildings and their occupants include a baby's shoe found embedded in an interior wall of the former Three Tuns Inn on Market Hill, demolished 1960-1, where Samuel Pepys drank in 1660.

On the wall in the Folklore section are other objects of interest—glass rollers or salt containers associated with the bringing of good luck; a split ash sapling through which a Cambridgeshire child was passed to cure hernia, and a "mandrake" or white bryony root with its ancient associations with fertility. There is also a caul in which a Fenman was born in 1891. This was carefully saved because possession of a caul was thought to ensure protection against drowning and to bestow the gift of oratory.

Hanging in the window of this room are two blue glass "witch balls" of the 18th century. They were considered effective in deflecting the evil eye although this belief may have grown up after the production of these decorative ornaments by the Nailsea and Bristol manufacturers.

Descending the stairs the visitor arrives in



The four pillars from Market Hill Conduit

(Photograph by Edward Leigh, Cambridge)

ROOM 10 EXHIBITION ROOM

This room is used for temporary exhibitions of which about three are held each year. It was first opened to the public in 1962.

EXIT from the Museum can be made either by the door at the foot of the stairs leading from Room 10, or by passing again through Room 1 to the door by the Bar and so into the street through the big gates. This will enable visitor to see

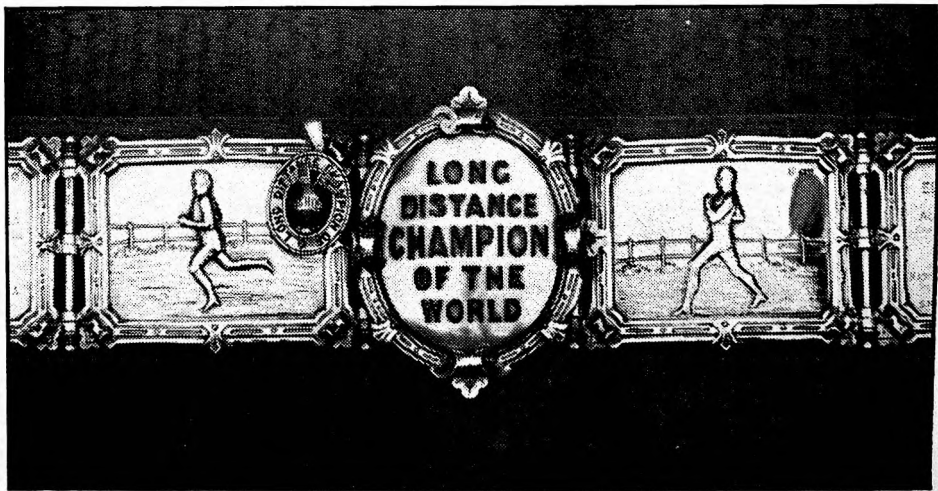
THE YARD

An important exhibit here is the 18th century shop front which was formerly 45 Bridge Street. Near to it are the stone pillars from the conduit which, in 1953, occupied the centre of the market place where they were erected in 1853. At the corners of the pillars are eight figures of famous natives of Cambridge whose names and dates are listed on the board nearby. On the wall near the pillars can be seen the original rings and chains to which horses of visitors to the inn were tethered, together with some name plates of Cambridge streets which do not now exist.

Nearby is one of the long fire hooks used to pull the thatch from burning buildings and, below it, one of the old Cambridge parish pumps and the bell from the gaol formerly on Castle Hill.

Under the archway are two interesting toll boards, one showing the tolls charged on goods carried in the past by river to Cambridge, the other the tolls on goods passing by road through the Cheveley tollgate. Below them are a rope winding gear and wheel and a cell door from the old Spinning House prison in St. Andrew's Street.

To the right of the exit door is a medieval stone bowl found in 1936 in the Guildhall, Cambridge, where it seems to have been used at some period in the past as a mortar. There is evidence, however, that it was originally a baptismal font, although from which church it is not known.



The Rowell Belt

(Acknowledgements to Cambridge News)

PRINTS, PICTURES, PHOTOGRAPHS

On the walls of the various rooms and of the passages and staircases are engravings, prints, paintings, etc. of local interest together with maps, theatre bills, public notices and photographs. The Museum has a very large collection of such items and, as it is possible to show only a few at one time, it is hoped that visitors wishing to see any which are not on display will apply to the Curator

On the staircase by Room 1 is the Silver Belt won outright in 1881, in New York, by Charles Rowell of Chesterton, the world champion long-distance runner, after two previous victories in 1879 and 1880. Rowell's record in 1881 was 280 miles in 62½ hours.

FOLK MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Voluntary subscriptions help to maintain this Museum and new Subscribers are always welcome. Members of the Association pay from 5/- a year. They receive an Annual Report and are entitled to attend the Annual Meeting.

WILL YOU JOIN?

Membership forms can be obtained from the Curator.

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